

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-29 are presently active in this case, Claims 1, 6, 23, 26 and 27 amended, and Claims 28 and 29 added by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Official Action the Title of the Invention was objected to as not being descriptive; Claims 22-23 were objected to for typographical errors; Claims 1-2, 4, 23 and 26-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,517,294 to Ogiri et al.; and Claims 3, 5-22 and 24-25 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitation of the base claim and any intervening claims.

First, Applicants wish to thank Examiner Grainger for the indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 3, 5-22 and 24-25. However, Applicants wish to maintain these claims in dependent form at this time since Applicants believe that the independent claims from which these claims depend are now in condition for allowance.

With regard to the objection to the title, Applicants have now amended the title to be more descriptive. Therefore, the objection to the title is now believed to be overcome.

With regard to the objection to Claims 22 and 23 as including typographical errors, Claim 23 has now been amended to eliminate any typographical errors. However, Applicants do not believe there are any typographical errors in Claim 22. If the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is requested to point out the typographical error of this claim in the next Official Action. Based on these amendments and comments, the objection to Claims 22 and 23 is believed to be overcome.

Turning now to the merits, in order to expedite issuance of a patent in this case, Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 22, 26 and 27 to clarify the patentable

features of the present invention over the cited references. Specifically, Applicants' independent Claims 1, 26 and 27 recite a cleaning member for cleaning an image carrier, the cleaning member including a support plate having a planar face portion configured to be fixed to an object in a position adjacent to the image carrier, a fold portion forming a plane that extends at an angle to the planar face portion and a reinforcement feature configured to reinforce a strength of the support plate and coupled to the planar face portion. Also recited is a blade connecting portion arranged on the planar face portion and an elastic blade member is connected to the blade connecting portion of the support plate such that the elastic blade extends toward the image carrier when the support plate is fixed to the object. Thus, Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 26 and 27 to clarify that the support plate includes a fold portion as well as a reinforcement feature on the planar face portion.

In contrast, the cited reference to Ogiri et al. discloses an image forming machine having a cleaning means 12. As shown in Figure 2 of Ogiri et al., the cleaning means includes a support plate 48 bent at a right angle 44 to form first and second surfaces. As seen in Figure 2, a first surface 46 is bolted to the image forming apparatus while the second surface at a right angle to the first surface includes an elastic cleaning member attached thereto, which extends to clean the drum 10. However, as also seen in Figure 2 of Ogiri et al., the cleaning member includes only a bend and does not include a reinforcement feature on a planar face of the support plate. Therefore, Claims 1, 26 and 27 patentably define over Ogiri et al. In this regard, Applicants note that original Claim 6 was identified by the Examiner as including allowable subject matter. This original Claim 6 recites a convex shaped protrusion extending from the planar face of the support plate and a fold portion forming a plane that extends substantially as a right angle to the planar face portion. Thus, allowable Claim 6 included both the reinforcement portion and the fold portion shown in the exemplary figures of the present application. However, Applicants believe that the detailed

limitation of a convex portion and the fold portion being substantially at a right angle are not necessary to patentably define over the cited reference to Ogiri et al. As discussed above, Ogiri et al. includes only a fold portion but not an additional reinforcement portion, as now claimed in Claims 1, 26 and 27.

With regard to Claim 22, this claim has been amended to recite the fold portion similar to the independent Claims 1, 26 and 27 discussed above. In addition, Claim 23 as amended, recites a means arranged on the plane of the support plate for reinforcing a strength of the support plate. Thus, Claim 26 includes a means plus function limitation that must be interpreted under 35 U.S.C. § 112, sixth paragraph to include the structure disclosed in the specification for performing the recited function, and equivalents thereof. As described in Applicants' specification, several configurations of the reinforcing portion 67 on the planar face of the support plate perform the reinforcing function. Ogiri et al. does not teach any structure on a plane (in addition to a bend) for reinforcing strength of the support plate. Therefore Claim 23 also patentably defines over the cited references.

For the reasons discussed above, Applicant's independent Claims 1, 23, 26 and 27, as amended herein, patentably define over the cited reference to Ogiri et al. Moreover, as Claims 2-17, 28 and 29, and Claims 24 and 25 depend from Claims 1 and 23 respectively, these dependent claims also patentably define over the cited references. In this regard, Applicants note that dependent Claims 28 and 29 have been added to depend from Claim 1 to clarify that Claim 1 does not require that the blade connecting portion be on the planar face portion of the support plate. For example, Figure 1C shows the blade connecting portion actually positioned on the planar face portion, however Figure 7A and 7B show the blade connecting portion on an adjacent angled portion of the support plate. Nevertheless, Claims 27 and 28 patentably define over the cited references for the same reasons as discussed above with respect to Claim 1.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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